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Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyz Republic and EU-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees, and for relations with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia

PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN – EUROPEAN UNION

Seventh Meeting

BRUSSELS

4-5 November 2008

MINUTES

The meeting opened at 15.00 on Tuesday 4 November 2008

1. Opening of the meeting and introductory speeches

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ welcomed Mr. Teshabaev, her co-chair, and all the members of the Uzbek delegation. She apologised that the European Parliament representation was much smaller than that of Uzbekistan but hoped that a fruitful discussion could be had nonetheless. She noted that the last time that an EU-Uzbekistan PCC had been held in Europe was in March 2004 in Strasbourg, but added that there had been a valuable meeting in Tashkent in March 2007. She remarked that in June 2007, the European Council had adopted its strategy on Central Asia, which was a sign of an increased EU focus on Uzbekistan and the region as a whole, and added that in February 2008 the European Parliament had adopted a resolution on the Council's Central Asia Strategy.

She noted that the European Union had recently lifted the visa and travel ban on certain individuals who had been in the Uzbek government, and that this decision had provoked much debate within the European Union and would be discussed in the meeting.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ thanked the Uzbek delegation for having proposed the agenda, and in the interest they had shown in putting forward a number of speakers. She said that frank and open discussion would be beneficial for both parties and that they should not be afraid of disagreement and lively debate. She then passed the floor to her co-chair, Mr. Teshabaev.

Mr. TESHABAEV thanked Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ and introduced the members of the Uzbek delegation. He noted that certain changes had taken place in the world since the previous PCC in March 2007. He mentioned that cooperation with European states individually, and with the European Union as a whole, were major priorities of the

Republic of Uzbekistan and had been since Uzbekistan achieved independence. He added that the strengthening of inter-parliamentary relations was a major component of this.

Mr. TESHABAEV noted that areas of cooperation, such as cooperation over the drugs trade, would improve relations in the long and short term. He stressed that since independence, Uzbekistan had moved towards democracy and that the concept of reform was strong. He stated that President Karimov often said that reforming and renewing the state and social structures was important, and that he wanted a shift from a strong state to a strong civil society. Mr. TESHABAEV said the Republic of Uzbekistan was built on the rule of law, and upheld the fundamental rights of the people. He added that the individual was the most important element in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Mr. TESHABAEV drew attention to three areas that he felt were of great importance. Firstly he noted that it was important to recognise common standards in basing democratic practices in each other's countries against the importance of differing forms of democracy from other countries. Secondly he noted that democracy in Europe was hundreds of years old, as opposed to 17 years old in Uzbekistan. He stressed that Uzbekistan was in favour of a gradual evolutionary development of social processes, rather than leaping into the unknown and possibly threatening the peace and stability of the country. Thirdly he said he was against the policy of applying pressure and embargoes, and that all countries had the right to build their futures as they saw fit. He said that his government was in favour of constructive dialogue and on equal rights.

Mr. TESHABAEV also suggested keeping the time for speeches to a minimum to allow more time for discussion. At the same time he proposed to enclose to the minutes texts of the speeches of meeting participants. He concluded that he hoped the meeting would be productive and useful for strengthening friendship.

2. Approval of the minutes of the sixth meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (Tashkent, 19 - 20 March 2007) (PE389.667)

Mr. Teshabaev thanked the European side for timely submission of draft minutes of the 6th PCC meeting and noted that the Uzbek side made some changes to make more precise certain issues which have been discussed at the meeting.

According to the Rules of procedure of the PCC Uzbekistan-EU Mr. Teshabaev proposed to approve the Minutes taking into consideration changes made by the Uzbek side.

There were no comments and remarks on the final version of the minutes of the 6th PCC meeting and the minutes were adopted taking into account proposals, suggestions and changes proposed by the Uzbek side previously.

3. Uzbekistan-EU relations in the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, including in the light of the EU strategy for Central Asia

Mr. SAIDOV thanked the delegation and emphasised that he looked forward to a frank and constructive dialogue. He said that he was interested in the development of constructive relations at all levels on the basis of equal rights and mutual respect, and also non-interference in Uzbek affairs.

Mr. SAIDOV said that the EU-Uzbekistan cooperation bodies were working very positively together, in such areas as the EU Troika and the working group on Central Asia.

He welcomed the dynamic cooperation between Europe and Central Asia. He spoke of various meetings including the two inter-regional ministerial meetings between the EU and Central Asia; the first was the interregional forum on security which took place on the 18 September in Paris between ministers of foreign affairs, and the second would be a meeting between Ministers of Justice, taking place at the end of November. He acknowledged that these meetings formed part of an effort to tackle common challenges and to develop mutually beneficial links.

Mr. SAIDOV mentioned three important aspects of EU relations with Uzbekistan, citing the geopolitical importance of Uzbekistan, the economic, transport and human potential in the region, and thirdly the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan.

Mr. SAIDOV said that more investment potential should be included in agreements, but that it was important to look carefully at this potential and that it should be within the context of each individual Central Asian country. He rejected the way in which certain countries were set aside as a regional leader, whereas others were victimised. He also stressed the importance of not applying double standards in the strategy.

Mr. SAIDOV said that the visa ban had been imposed on the basis of unfounded information and that such restrictions could equally have been imposed on many other countries. He further stated that the arms embargo was counter-productive, as Uzbekistan did not buy arms from the European Union. Mr. SAIDOV said that the EU should endeavour instead to look at the positive efforts of Uzbekistan to democratise society. He added that they should work without ideological interference. He concluded that Uzbekistan was ready to work with the EU, provided that the EU was willing to cooperate in its turn with Tashkent.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ spoke of the importance of the EU strategy for Central Asia, and mentioned the visit to Kyrgyzstan which had taken place the previous week. She said that she was very interested in regional cooperation, but also noted that a bilateral approach with individual Central Asian countries and EU countries was also essential. She noted that there was some lack of understanding and cooperation between Central Asian states on such areas as drug trafficking.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ asked about how ongoing projects were benefiting Uzbekistan and how the Uzbeks felt about the EU strategy on Central Asia.

She pointed out that the sanctions had partially been lifted by the EU as encouragement for the future and said that there was still much more that needed to be discussed in this respect.

Mr. CALLANAN welcomed the Uzbek guests and said that he hoped that they would take back some of the liberal practices of the European Parliament with them. He said that the EU sanctions had been a source of controversy at the EU, and noted that they were really only symbolic anyway, as many member states had ignored the visa ban. However, he stressed that such sanctions could always be reimposed. He asked if there were any thoughts on what action Uzbekistan would take next.

Mr. CALLANAN also referred to the two Human Rights activists who had been jailed for ten years each shortly before the sanctions had been lifted, and noted that all the international monitoring organisations had suggested that the men had been arrested on trumped up charges. He asked what further liberalisation would take place, and if

Uzbekistan intended to open up to more international media organisations, noting that the BBC and Radio Europe were banned from reporting there. He concluded by expressing his view that Uzbekistan remained one of the most repressive regimes in the world.

Mr. SAIDOV highlighted two problems. He agreed that the sanctions were controversial and argued that such an approach ran counter to international law. He felt that Mr. Callanan's statement that sanctions could be reimposed was counter-productive. He noted that the EU partners did not even ask for the Uzbeks' opinion. He said that the people Mr. Callanan mentioned were not human rights defenders, but had transgressed criminal codes.

He said that Uzbekistan was continuing with democratisation, and that he would give more details on this later on.

Mr. SAIDOV underlined two Uzbek projects which demonstrated movement towards democracy; i.e. the abolition of the death penalty and the introduction of habeas corpus. He noted that these two examples of democratisation and the advance of human rights could be an example for other Central Asian countries.

Mr. TESHABAEV said that he supported Mr. Saidov's statement, but noted that the agenda should be followed. He added that the purpose of the meeting was to find ways forward and to understand each other better.

Mrs. JEGGLE said the information in the European Parliament policy note seemed dated. She asked if the Uzbek delegation could provide more up to date information. She also questioned the accuracy of a German source in the dossier. She said that the European Parliament had struggled for a greater level of co-decision and that more thought could be given to some of the information in the policy note.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ said that the document was written by a member of staff. She said that Mrs. Jeggle might read the information in a different way from herself, and that one of the beautiful things about democracy was that there was no monopoly over truth.

Mr. SAIDOV stressed that EU democracy was very old, and referred to the spirit of discussion and diversity of opinion.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ spoke of her fresh opinions from Kyrgyzstan. She noted that sometimes it was more important to learn from inter-personal meetings than from documents. She added that dialogue and disagreement made for a better path to mutual understanding.

4. Political and economic developments in Uzbekistan and the European Union

Mr. TESHABAEV said he had prepared a long speech but would shorten it for the purpose of the meeting, provided the full version was minuted.

Mr. TESHABAEV said that state independence was incontrovertible. He added that reforms were being introduced in all spheres. He said that the Uzbek model of social reform was fully justified, and that they were moving from a strong state to a strong civil society.

In terms of politics, Mr. TESHABAEV stressed priority tasks and directions determined by the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan vis-à-vis the society in order to attain strategic goals.

He particularly stressed the growing role of political parties, especially after entry into force in 2008 of the constitutional law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on strengthening the role of political parties in renewing and further democratization of public administration and modernisation of the country that became a considerable event in social and political life of Uzbekistan. He noted establishment of professional bi-cameral parliament and partial shift of certain powers of the President to the Senate.

He said that there was wide participation of the people in the Uzbek government and that political parties were being strengthened as they linked leadership with the people. He also mentioned that a constitutional law had been passed, and had come into force in January, about strengthening parties. He added that the adoption of this law was a major stage in the development of the country and to moving towards a strong civil society.

Mr. TESHABAEV also spoke about the multi-party system, saying that four parties were represented in the Oliy Majlis lower house and were all present at the PCC, including his own party. He said that the Liberal Democratic Party, the National Democratic Party "National revival" and the Social Democratic Party "Justice" had formed a single Democratic block in the Parliament, which was the Parliamentary majority. He added that there was also the People's Democratic Party which as successor of the former Communist Party had declared itself as opposition to the Liberal Democratic Party ideas.

Mr. TESHABAEV explained that a new constitutional law had come into force guaranteeing the activity of opposition members in the Parliament. He said that the leaders of all political parties were also deputy speakers for the lower house of the Parliament. He stressed that there was always scrutiny on the activities of the executive over state authorities. He talked about the reform of the legal and judicial system to protect the rights of citizens and the full abolition of the death penalty.

He noted that Uzbekistan joined the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, not because they wanted to please others but because it was important for building a democratic society.

Mr. TESHABAEV noted that another priority of the Uzbek government was to strengthen NGOs and the media. There would, he said, be a shift of powers from central authorities to regional authorities and local non-state managed structures - Mahallas. He said the decree was passed by the President to set up public funds to support certain elements in civil society.

Mr. TESHABAEV also noted reforms that allowed parliament to have a say on who got how much money and for what purpose, and that such reforms were unique. He noted that without freedom of information, one could not talk about having a strong civil society.

Turning to the economic situation in Uzbekistan, Mr. TESHABAEV said that there was stable growth in most branches of the economy. He noted that a whole series of laws had been passed, including legislation passed to safeguard the economic reform of the economy. He noted that Uzbekistan did not rely on external money sources and so the system was reliable and cushioned from the international financial crisis. He added that measures had been taken to recapitalise the banks and diversify their assets.

Mr. TESHABAEV also said that a law had been passed to allow people to own their businesses and to increase production. He noted that small businesses and GDP had grown

by 45% in the first nine months of 2008. He said that the middle class would be the driving force of a democratic society. He added that reliable economic growth had been achieved through market reforms and transformations in the economy, and not just through exploiting energy resources.

Mr. TESHABAEV noted a number of priorities, including further liberalisation of the economy, economic independence of companies, the introduction of free-market infrastructure, and reduction of the state's interference in entrepreneurial activity. He also noted high tech production such as in the motor industry, the food industry and pharmaceuticals, and the development of transport links as important factors for the development of the country. On this last point he stressed the importance of increased transportation links such as railways in increasing Uzbekistan's import and export potential.

Mr. TESHABAEV concluded that Uzbekistan also set another important strategic task of increasing the wages in 2-2,5 times every two to three years. He said all of Uzbekistan's reforms were designed to improve the welfare of the population. He added that half of Uzbekistan's population was under the age of 30 and that this made for a decisive force in the future of the country.

There were animated discussions on this item of the agenda.

Mr. CALLANAN wanted to know what the facts on the ground were. He said that if one read independent reports by NGOs, the picture of Uzbekistan was that it was an authoritarian state. He read out from a report, which stressed that democratic institutions were a facade and that the government operated according to its own rules.

Mr. CALLANAN also wanted to know when any independent international NGOs could operate in Uzbekistan, noting that even the UNHCR had been banned and expelled after the Andijan massacre. On the climate of media freedom, Mr. CALLANAN asked if this was really the case, enquiring whether the BBC, Radio Europe and other international media organisations were now allowed to report freely on events in Uzbekistan.

He referred back to the jailing and torture of two Human Rights activists, both of whom had been jailed for ten years on trumped up charges. He went into greater detail about the cases of the two men - Mr. Agzam Turgunov, who was tortured in prison, and Mr. Solijon Abdurakhmanov.

Mr. CALLANAN spoke of numerous reports including the reports of Amnesty International 2008, Human Rights Watch 2008 and UN Rapporteurs which all were concerned with human rights abuses in Uzbekistan. He said UN rapporteurs were not even allowed into the country and that there was no desire on the part of Uzbek authorities to cooperate. He then apologised for having to leave immediately after giving his statement.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ wanted to know who in the delegation was a member of the People's Democratic Party. She also asked how many parliamentarians there were and if the opposition was involved in key positions in the government. She asked about the role of the Mahalas, and enquired whether there was any formal or informal government interaction with them, and what the social situation of the Mahalas was.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ also wanted to know whether Uzbekistan received Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and which countries were providing FDI and if so and in what way such investment was taking place.

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA said that she was the representative for the People's Democratic Party, but she stressed that this was absolutely not the successor to the Communist Party. She explained that it had been set up in the first years of independence, and had a large number of members. She said that her party was the most democratic one which genuinely protected the interests of its electorate. She said there were 28 members of her party in the government, and their leader was a deputy speaker in the lower house. She added that 50% of the chairs of the Mahala committees were representatives of her party, partly because her party had a large membership compared to other parties and furthermore the ideas of her party were supported by the people and many strata of society, and that the ideas of her party were more directed towards the welfare of the people.

Mr. TURSUNOV said he represented the Democratic Party of Uzbekistan. He stressed that Mr. Teshabaev was incorrect in saying the National Democratic Party because it was in fact just the Democratic Party. The parties were therefore the People's Democratic Party, the Democratic Party, the Social Democratic Party, the Liberal Democratic Party and then independent members. He said the representation in parliament was split fairly.

Mr. TURSUNOV added that some of the parties were partly merged in June and had a new leader of the party, and that the Democratic Party had shrunk in size, from second biggest party to third biggest.

Mrs. RADJABOVA said that the elections of the chair persons of the Mahalas were held once every two and a half years, and were taking place this November and December. She said that there were more than 10,000 Mahalas in Uzbekistan, and that these institutions were embodied in the constitution of Uzbekistan.

Mrs. RADJABOVA added that membership of candidates to political parties does not play any role in election of Mahalas chairs. She also noted that the institution of the Mahala went in line with the traditions of the Uzbek people and, accordingly, a lot of attention was given to full-fledged functioning of this institution.

Mrs. JEGGLE wanted to know why Uzbekistan had two different levels of parliament and if and how they worked together. She asked if they conflicted or if they acted as one unit. She also asked what Uzbekistan's interest in the EU was, and what Uzbek-EU relations were like compared to Uzbek-Russian or Uzbek-Chinese relations, given the recent Georgia crisis.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ asked if the Mahala's played an important role in political life. She also apologised for the limited representation on the European Parliament side in the PCC.

Mr. TESHABAEV clarified that there were two houses in the parliament, the upper and lower, and that both the senate and the lower house were represented in the delegation. He said that the political parties were becoming more active, but in many ways they were like one unit in representing Uzbekistan to the EU.

Mr. TESHABAEV stressed that one of the main priorities for Uzbekistan was cooperation with the EU. He pointed out that despite their heavy workload all Members of the Parliament had found the time to come to the European Parliament in order to attend the meeting, demonstrating their interest in the EU.

He added that Uzbekistan had made the right choice in strengthening civil society, and wanted to work within the Partnership Cooperation Agreement with all European countries.

Mr. SAIDOV said that all Uzbeks were in a Mahala, and so could no one not really be outside the Mahala system, but added that the Parliament did not participate in the organisation of the elections of the chairpersons of the Mahalas. He noted that Mahalas were national democratic institutions that dated back centuries, and were a significant body of self government of citizens, representing the way of life of the people of Uzbekistan.

On the policy of Uzbekistan in the light of recent incidents in the Caucasus, Mr. SAIDOV said that Uzbekistan's position was represented in the final document of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Mr. SAIDOV also responded to Mr. Callanan's question, saying that there were many NGOs in Uzbekistan. He noted that there were 48 international and foreign NGOs, 24 of which were US-based. He said there were also a number of EU based NGOs operating in Uzbekistan, and cited examples of Germany, the UK, Sweden, the Czech Republic, France and the Netherlands. He added that there were also Korean, Japanese and Indian NGOs.

With regard to the situation of specific individuals, Mr. SAIDOV said he would respond when Mr. Callanan returned.

5. Exchange of views on development of Uzbekistan-EU relations since the Sixth meeting of the PCC, including:

-social, economic and financial issues;

Mrs. SAKS referred to the economy, asking about the need for a good credit system, and requirements for minimum capital. She also asked about foreign investments. She too asked about the situation regarding the harvest and decrease in cotton production, and also what the situation regarding child labour on cotton plantations was like now. Her final question related to the economy and gas reserves, in the light of Mr. Putin's recent visit to the region. She noted that the EU was very interested to have better cooperation with Uzbekistan in this area.

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA that a series of laws had been passed on issues related to credit. She explained that there was a law on microfinance where small loans were given to small businesses and households, and that minimum capital requirements for banks were a priority, especially for commercial banks.

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA mentioned some figures, stating that the total minimum capital requirement for commercial banks had gone up 40%, that credit available in the real sector had gone up 16%, and that there had been a 23% increase in savings in banks. She noted that this meant there was more money available or loans to flow back into the economy. She said that this had been helped by new laws on microfinancing and setting up of microcredit organisations.

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA said that most investment came from within Uzbekistan, but noted that there was a 23% increase in foreign investments in 2007, and a 56% increase in FDI. She noted that Uzbekistan had improved the legal foundation to attract foreign investment, but that the possibilities could be further increased.

Mrs. SAKS said she was happy to hear positive things about the Uzbek economy.

Mr. AKHADOV gave a brief overview of the government's spending, saying that taxes had come down significantly, in general from 40 to 22%, and that GDP had gone up two and a half times. He also said that the gold reserves had increased. He noted that they were paying off debts, which currently amounted to 13.3 % of GDP. In 2009 56.5 % of the budget would go to the social sphere, and 2.2% of GDP would go towards benefit payments. He said that the recent surge in food prices might provide greater export potential and that Uzbekistan was seeking to increase food production to minimise the adverse effects of the food crisis.

On the cotton industry, Mr. AKHADOV said that in 2008 cotton fields were reduced by 50000 hectares where the land were being replanted for food crops instead of cotton, food export would be increased. He added that cotton fields used to make up 80% of agricultural land, and now that number was only 30%.

Mr. AKHADOV outlined the reform and deregulation of the economy, the development of market infrastructure, and the reduction of state interference in business. He noted that these reforms were welcomed by the IMF and the World Bank. He added that Uzbekistan wanted to encourage small businesses and enterprises, and that small private businesses accounted for 48% of GDP.

Mr. AKHADOV turned to the banking sector and spoke about a special micro credit bank created two years previously to provide loans. He noted that trade with the EU was at 1.7 billion USD, and had increased over the first 6 months of 2008 compared to 2007. He stated that exports from the EU were 758 million USD and imports were 800 million USD. He added that there were 700 companies registered in Uzbekistan which had links to the EU, including 303 representations from EU companies, and 256 million USD had come in from investments with EU companies so far in 2008. However, he declared that Uzbekistan wanted greater access to European markets, and said that tariff preferences for exporters under the GSP should strengthen cooperation.

Mr. AKHADOV mentioned areas where greater EU cooperation was desirable such as technology and the development of agriculture; the implementation of infrastructure projects for roads and railways and IT; the possibility of joining the WTO; the financing infrastructure projects by the European Investment Bank; assistance for diversification of tourist services; assistance for the development of the banking sector and for foreign investment structures; and support from MEPs for diversification of trade with EU states; and finally greater preferential access to EU markets for Uzbekistan.

Mr. SULTANOV, on the issue of gas, explained that Uzbekistan cooperated with many different companies and countries, not just with Russia. He spoke of the diversification of the production of mineral resources. He talked briefly about the two major Central Asian conversion plants, three gas generation plants and the building of a new gas chemical plant in Uzbekistan. He added that Uzbekistan was totally self-sufficient in hydrocarbons and that they also supplied neighbouring states. He noted that at the moment exports reached 90 billion cubic metres a year, and this was to be increased by a further 11 to 13 billion. He said Uzbekistan did not just want one buyer for all its raw materials and they were looking towards various markets.

Mr. SAIDOV returned to the issue of child labour in the cotton industry, emphasising that Uzbek legislation complied with the standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). He clarified that children between the ages of 14 and 16 could work, but only for

three hours a day and with the parents' consent. He added that earlier in 2008 two ILO conventions, numbers 138 and 182, had been ratified.

Secondly, he pointed out that all cotton in Uzbekistan was produced by the private sector, and so was not state property.

Lastly, Mr. SAIDOV spoke about the international boycott of Uzbek cotton, and stated that this represented the politicisation of an economic question. He concluded that the initiators of such boycotts should take responsibility for the producers affected.

Mr. TESHABAEV made a comparison with Soviet times and said that one should simply know what was the situation before and what is the current situation. Today in Uzbekistan all lands belong to farmers, only they decide how much to sow, when to sow and whom to hire. Education of children from their early age to appropriate labour is a normal phenomenon in our country and even it can be attributed to our traditions. Because, undoubtedly, it exercises a positive influence on their education, physical and moral health. Myself, in childhood I helped my parents, relatives in building houses, in spring time field works in family subsidiary farms. If one looks at the issue from another point of view, we understand well that the issue is linked with Uzbek cotton for which there is a strong competition on world markets. Someone wants to eliminate the competition in this way. Thirdly, one can look at the issue in comparison with soviet time. In soviet time children were massively brought to cotton harvest by administrative means and in a mandatory manner. After gaining the Independence and implementation of reforms in agrarian sector of the economy of Uzbekistan these kind of practices were totally excluded. I think you will agree that we have gathered here not to address reproaches each other, but to find ways of further strengthening our cooperation. That is not productive and a waste of time. We stand for democratic reforms and believe that without reforms it is not possible to ensure security, stability and well-being of the people. In order to give an impartial assessment of the situation and make right conclusion, I think it is important to approach the issue and consider it in the dynamic of development of reforms, modernisation and renewal of the country. Without understanding tremendous changes in the mind of our people and all fields of development at least for last 10 years as well as achievements at current step of development of the country, I think it is absolutely wrong to make sudden and premature conclusions and create problems, dramatize the situation. It would be productive, if you, our dear partners could advise on ways of practical assistance. If we are friends, we have to behave in this very manner. He said that much less land will be going to be used for cotton in the future. In conclusion he noted that since Independence of Uzbekistan prohibition of the use of child labour is clearly set in legislative acts and a relevant control is carried out over their implementation.

Mr. ALIEV agreed with Mr. TESHABAEV and said child labour was no longer used in the harvesting of cotton and that Uzbekistan abided by international legislation on this matter. Therefore, he stated, the allegations were totally groundless.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ concluded the meeting for the first day. She added that extra time would have to be made for the discussion on Human Rights since the Round Table would not be taking place.

Mrs. JEGGLE expressed her disappointment that there would be no Round Table.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ said there was no reason to hold a separate conference in the afternoon since there was not enough time to invite external participants such as NGOs.

She also said it was important that this issue be expressed between the two parliaments anyway, and she did not see the point in holding a Round Table only to repeat the same topics from the morning meeting. She concluded that it made the most sense to extend the time on the human rights dialogue in the morning.

The meeting ended at 1815hs.

5 November 2008

The meeting opened at 0900hs.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ welcomed everyone to the second day of talks. She noted that the agenda for the latter half of the day needed to be agreed immediately.

Mr. Teshabaev pointed out that the agreement on holding the round table on Human Rights in the framework of the 7th PCC meeting was agreed earlier. But Mrs. Juknevičienė proposed to move the round table to the morning session as NGOs and other EU agencies will not be able to attend the meeting. Mr. Teshabaev said that duration of discussions on Human Rights could be expanded to one and half hour and, accordingly, asked his Uzbek colleagues to speak on other topics more briefly in order to have enough time for discussions during round table.

Mrs. Juknevičienė agreed with these changes and said that they could work till 12.30 hours.

Mr. TESHABAEV said that there had been the intention to hold the round table on Human Rights in the afternoon, but since no NGOs or other non EU agencies would be present, he proposed transferring the round table to the morning session. He said that instead the discussion on human rights could be extended to one and a half hours, and he asked his Uzbek colleagues to correspondingly make short speeches on the other topics to allow time for this.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ said that the changes were acceptable and that they would work until 12.30.

Item 5 continued: Exchange of views on development of Uzbekistan-EU relations since the Sixth meeting of the PCC, including:

-Democratic processes, human rights and civic liberties in Uzbekistan

Mrs. RADJABOVA noted that since the Independence in Uzbekistan a special attention has been given to democratization of the society, ensuring Human Rights and Freedoms.

Mrs. RADJABOVA said that in the context of globalization and global changes in economic, social, political and cultural life of society in Uzbekistan, at this stage of development relations in the field of human rights were acquiring a new significance and content. And this was fully conforming to international standards and creates all conditions necessary for effective implementation of provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents in this field.

Mrs. RADJABOVA informed that in the framework of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Europe there had been several meetings on human rights. She said that since the Sixth meeting of the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee the Upper house of the Parliament of Uzbekistan – Senate hold 7 plenary sessions during which 105 laws in the field of democratization of the society, human rights and civil liberties had been adopted. There were about 30 laws directly related to the deepening of judicial reforms, including the abolition of the death penalty and the introduction of Habeas Corpus as well as reforms for liberalizing the system for lawyers which constitute the basis for transparency of the legal system.

Mrs. RADJABOVA emphasized that process of democratisation of the society required close interaction between nongovernmental organizations and state bodies in comprehensive implementation of Human Rights. There had been effective and transparent conditions for ensuring participation of civil society institutions in carrying out public control, in particular over applying act of amnesty by courts, concrete legal measures had been adopted and were being implemented. To accomplish this in regions there were working groups consisting of senators, members of Parliament and regional representatives of Ombudsman.

Mrs. RADJABOVA noted that Uzbekistan was firmly opposed to so-called "Human Rights Defenders" whose activities were aimed at interference in the internal affairs of Uzbekistan. She reprimanded certain western organizations for considering criminals, convicted or prosecuted as human rights activists and pointed out that in Uzbekistan Human Rights protection activity was not a penal act. Although according to some western experts in Uzbekistan there were supposedly cases of imprisonment for Human Rights protection activity, in fact those persons were punished for concrete crimes they had committed. She also added that in Uzbekistan the courts were independent and worked independently from the Parliament.

Mrs. RADJABOVA emphasized that the Constitution of Uzbekistan established the principle of division of powers into the legislative, the executive and the judiciary which was the basis of checks and balances system and suppose non-interference of one branch of power into the activity of other branches.

In conclusion Mrs. RADJABOVA stressed that the Upper house of the Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan positively assesses the European Parliament stance on ensuring the rule of law, good governance and democratization with protection of Human Rights and freedoms.

Mrs. JEGGLE asked what the weight of the Mahalas was. She also said that it was one thing to pass a law but she wanted to know how they were implemented in practice. Finally she asked if people knew what rights they were entitled to.

Mrs. RABJIABOVA noted that since Habeas Corpus had first been introduced in 2005, special measures had been taken to make the population fully aware of the new laws which were implemented, and what advantages and privileges they had been given. She added that there had been close involvement with international experts, and that there had been cultural events held to raise awareness. She noted that these had been very effective.

Mrs. RASHIDOVA outlined legal developments, saying that in 1997 a national programme had been adopted to make the population more aware of legal issues. She said that young people were taught about their rights, and that a lot of attention was paid to education about the constitution. She added that there were other cultural events aimed at all segments of the population to increase their legal literacy. She concluded that complaints reaching the Ombudsman's office were much clearer and demonstrated a much improved knowledge of entitlement to rights.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ wanted to hear examples of times when people had come to ask about human rights issues, what their problems were, and how they resolved.

Mrs. JEGGLE wanted to hear from the Commission as they were already partners in those projects.

Mrs. RASHIDOVA answered that there had been Spanish and French involvement with the Ombudsman and engagement in information campaigns. In response to the first question, she replied that the Ombudsman's office receives by post written requests and complaints of citizens, citizens are also personally received on a regular basis. They might get in touch because they did not agree with a court decision, and it is their right to make a complaint.

She explained that the Ombudsman had the right to attend trials, and to get access to information and documents, but that they could not interfere in the procedures. She said that they functioned in accordance with international standards.

Mr. SAIDEV wanted to supplement the information on habeas corpus with some figures, saying that there had been 7634 applications to the court with connection to habeas corpus, and that 7499 application for arrests had been granted. He also spoke of the successful implementation of two projects, the first being the TACIS project, which now covered the two houses of Parliament, and the second being the support for democratisation reforms from the EU.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČENĖ said that they would discuss Human Rights issues further during the round table debate.

- Healthcare System

Mr. SALIKHOV highlighted three areas of importance in the social field in the country - science, education and healthcare. He noted that more than 50% of the budget resources were devoted to those three areas, and that the Uzbek government wanted to work more closely with the EU. He noted that education and science required the use and development of high level technologies and believed that increased cooperation in these areas would be particularly useful for both sides. He said that since the beginning of cooperation in the field of science and technologies under the INTAS program 152 scientific teams from Uzbekistan received 114 grants for carrying out research and development activities. They amount to a total of over two million Euros. He added that there were bilateral projects with Poland, the UK, Italy, France and Germany amongst others.

Mr. SALIKHOV acknowledged that there was a lot of cooperation already in the areas of prospective scientific projects, education and TACIS program, but that these could be improved. He added that at a meeting in Brussels in October 2008 under the Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Students (TEMPUS), three new areas of partnership cooperation had been identified with direct participation of ministers of education from partnership countries. During 2009 a number of events had been organised on fundamental issues of education, including improving secondary and higher education. He noted that five universities were now participating in the ERASMUS programme and a number of Uzbek researchers had been able to study abroad and write their doctoral thesis. Turning to TACIS, he said there were various projects aimed at improving secondary and vocational education and that three million Euros had been given to these areas. However he added that there was a sore need for increased cooperation in the area of higher and specialised training.

On health care, Mr. SALIKHOV said that there had been cooperation with the EU in terms of practical health care and medical research. He talked about a new surgical school and

contemporary methods of treating patients with the Hepatitis virus. He said that there were also projects to improve healthcare for mothers with young children. He spoke also of new specialist medical schools in Tashkent, and that under the TEMPUS programme there were twinning projects between European and Uzbek counterparts. TACIS programme, he added, had also contributed a lot to preventative practical measures in the public healthcare system, citing the example of projects for providing medical help to mothers and new born children, worth 3.8 million Euros, until 2010.

Mr. SALIKHOV concluded that the government of Uzbekistan placed great store by these socially important areas, and that the national budget was sufficient to accommodate them. However there was a great need to train young specialists in these areas. Therefore further development and strengthening cooperation with the EU in these areas is of real interest.

Mr. PETERLE supported further cooperation in these social areas. He added that in Europe, current health trends were not promising, with increases in cancer, heart disease and diabetes. He said that there was a strong emphasis on prevention, and that education for doctors, nurses, patients and those who were still healthy was very important. He hoped for cooperation on both sides.

Mrs. RASHIDOVA noted that a great deal of importance was attached to the rights of patients who were receiving treatment and that a series of seminars on protecting patient rights were going to be held in conjunction with the European Commission.

Mr. SALIKHOV agreed that development and use of preventative medicine was of the utmost importance. He mentioned that last year four new large centres specialized in cardiology, oncology, endocrinology and ophtalmology had been opened and where a lot of attention was paid to preventative medicine methods. He noted that the hospitals were established on modern level and well equipped. He concluded that preventative medicine and prognosis were areas to which Uzbekistan paid a great deal of attention.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ read out figures from the Economist Intelligence Unit, which stated that in 1992, 4.8% of Uzbek's GDP was spent on health care, and that figure had dropped to 2.4% in 2004. She asked if the Uzbeks could provide more updated information on what the situation was like now, and also for infant mortality rates. She also asked if Uzbekistan faced the problem of a brain drain, with doctors leaving for better paid positions elsewhere.

Mr. SALIKHOV pointed out that considerable resources were allocated for funding the health care. He added that, according to the established standards of payment for civil servants in the country, medical workers were well paid and that there was not really a problem with doctors leaving the country any more, although this had happened in the 1990s. He also noted that over 30% of post-graduate students were gaining their doctorate in the field of health care. He concluded by expressing optimism about prospects of the healthcare system of the country, but that it was also important to have links with European countries in regards to these areas.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ noted that in Lithuania there had been the problem of the so called "gift system" in the medical system, which was really a form of bribery between the doctor and patient. She asked if this was also a problem in Uzbekistan.

Mr. SALIKHOV stated that from his own experience, he had never had to bribe a doctor for treatment. However, he felt that if such gifts did occur it was probably more as a token

of gratitude after an operation in the form of a bouquet of flowers, and that nobody would be refused treatment if they did not provide a gift.

Mr. AKHADOV said that about 5% of GDP was allocated to healthcare. He added that in 2008 about 11% of social expenditure went on health, and that this would rise to 12% in 2009. On salaries, he mentioned that there was money set aside for health professionals in such areas as maternal and infant healthcare, and that specialists could receive a bonus of up to 50%. He noted that heads of schools could allocate their budget as they saw fit. He added that there was also a lot of growth in the private medical field and that a great deal of attention was given to health care.

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA said that in comparison to four or five years ago, expenditure was much better in the social sphere. In 2007, for example, expenditure on health had increased by 28%. As for mortality figures, she noted that in the last ten years the general level of mortality had decreased by 22%, infant mortality had gone down 18% and maternal mortality had dropped by 38%. She concluded that a great deal of attention had been paid to this area and that these improvements were the result of reforms and injections of money into the system.

- Protection of the environment and exploitation of natural resources

Mr. ALIEV said that there was cooperation on environmental protection at both regional and international levels. There would be support for existing eco systems and to stop further drying up of the Aral Sea basin, which affected 50 million people. He pointed out that in the last 35 to 40 years, the level of the water had decreased by 30 metres, the surface area had been reduced fourfold, four million hectares of dried land had been created, soil erosion was endemic and there were huge problems with dust clouds. All of this caused huge social and economic problems.

Mr. ALIEV said there was great interest to promote EU involvement in specific projects, such as desertification prevention, and effective water management, mineralisation of water and monitoring of the situation. He outlined a number of areas where cooperation would be beneficial, including technical and financial support, bringing in environmentally friendly alternative sources of energy, in forecasting, cleaning up the aftermath of man made environmental disasters, and bringing in contemporary technology for eliminating waste.

He added that particular attention should be paid to the issue of building hydroelectric power plants on the trans-boundary rivers of Central Asia as it will have irreversible social and ecological consequences in the region. Firstly, it will aggravate the existing social-economic and ecological situation in Aral sea area, contribute to the expansion of desertification, worsen the quality of drinking water in all the basin of transboundary rivers, lead to the disappearance of biological resources and, as a whole, will negatively influence many fields of the life of population of a whole region where more than 50 million persons. He noted that international legal basis on the use of transboundary rivers and waters should be the basis for building an efficient system of common use of water resources in Central Asia.

Mr. ALIEV also spoke briefly about cooperation on energy and the INOGATE project. He talked too about the formation of joint investment projects for both resources and high tech technologies to ensure sustainable economic growth, and problems encountered with transportation.

On the fuel sector, Mr. ALIEV mentioned various partnerships and joint projects with countries such as South Korea, the UAE, Malaysia, Russia and China, for a total sum of 4.5 billion dollars. He mentioned the proposal for a gas pipeline through Uzbekistan connecting Turkmenistan and China.

Mr. ALIEV concluded that Uzbekistan was concerned about climate change and was interested in cooperating with the EU to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ gave her apologies and left for another meeting, leaving Mrs. JEGGLE as chair.

Mrs. JEGGLE took the floor and asked about a water conference to be held at ministerial level which she had heard about during the mission to Kyrgyzstan the previous week. She asked if anyone would comment on the protection of waterways and water management.

Mr. ALIEV said that there were conventions on safeguarding lakes and waterways and UN conventions on the usage of water basins, and that the use of waterways should be based on agreements and international standards. He noted that in the Central Asian region 95% of the water resources crossed boundaries.

Mrs. JEGGLE highlighted the need for bilateral approaches on this issue and asked the Commission if there were examples of European joint projects on water management.

The representative from the European Commission explained that 60% of water in Europe was trans-border and that there were constant issues of having to deal with shared water. He noted that there would be meetings on water issues in the coming weeks, the first in Almaty, and the second in Ashgabat. He suggested twinning projects with river-basin communities in Europe and also recommended starting projects on smaller water supplies in Central Asia to see what the main issues were and how best to proceed. He outlined the importance of building on concrete confidence building measures.

He also mentioned sustainable energy and development, referring back to INOGATE which focused not only on oil and gas but also renewable and sustainable energies, and the investments required in these areas. He also highlighted the importance of water sanitation for the prevention of disease.

On climate change, he stated that there was an EU strategy and platform for cooperation which encompassed a number of environmental themes. On science and education, he said that the EU was keen to enhance exchange of experience and contacts with scientific and educational communities and added that there was a new project for internet linking with higher level institutions of Central Asian countries and EU countries, which would hopefully start in 2009.

Mr. PETERLE said he was interested in the Aral Sea, and that there could be real results in this area. He too pointed to the importance of confidence building projects.

Mr. ALIEV addressed the issue of the trans-boundary nature of rivers, saying that five countries of the Central Asian region had already made certain arrangements using the available water resources, and that at a meeting in Kazakhstan on 18 October this year the problem of the Aral Sea had been discussed. He added that possible assistance of the EU and investments in the framework were already adopted in the strategy.

6. Cooperation mechanisms in the fight against organised crime, drug trafficking, terrorism and religious extremism

Mr. TURSUNOV said that this area was one of the highest priorities for Uzbekistan in terms of international relations, and that cooperation already existed. He added that all the UN conventions in this area had been ratified. He said that the headquarters of the military police reported to the OSCE about terrorist activity and other areas of importance. He mentioned the SCO conference on Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime, adding that the intention was to improve cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of the member countries.

Mr. TURSUNOV described the legal system, saying there were laws enacted to confiscate any funds associated with terrorist or drug trafficking activities, and that they had managed to identify a number of terrorists. He asked for more assistance from the EU for training customs officers.

On money laundering, Mr. TURSUNOV said that cooperation mechanisms could be put in place to ensure better identification of suspects. He also spoke of a number of training seminars and bilateral agreements aimed at helping in the area of combating drug trafficking and religious extremism. Between 2007 and 2008 Uzbekistan had organised 25 training seminars for more than 120 representatives of law enforcement agencies. He also listed a number of bilateral agreements in this area, including eight agreements with the EU.

Mr. TURSUNOV stressed that to combat terrorism it was necessary to have effective cooperation systems between Central Asia and Europe in order to undermine the actions of terrorists. He emphasised the need to eliminate the sources of terrorism and the resources that terrorists utilised. This meant, he stated, demilitarising Afghanistan, improving the lives of people and increasing stability in the region. He added that the situation in Afghanistan exacerbated the drugs situation in Uzbekistan, since many of the drugs from Afghanistan were smuggled to Russia and the West through Uzbekistan. In order to confront this, he said, border control needed to be improved by providing border control points with modern equipment, and also to reduce the demand for drugs by setting up appropriate clinics for drug addicts.

To conclude, Mr. TURSUNOV explained that globalisation had consequences for Western Europe as well, in terms of migration, organised crime, combating drugs and human trafficking and the proliferation of weapons.

7. EU technical assistance and its effectiveness

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA said that, since 1992, 12 different programmes had been signed and about 137 projects implemented, involving such areas as education, training of management, the development of the economy, tackling social problems, transport, combating drugs trafficking, border cooperation and the environment. She added that there were new forms of cooperation, including micro credit and investment, and that total cooperation amounted to 37.4 million Euros this year covering 20 projects. She noted that financing technical assistance could take a long time, and that the practical implementation of this project might only start in 2009. She wanted to ask if this could be accelerated to December 2008 so that it would begin during the tenure of the current parliament. She also noted that the contribution from TACIS was now quite small compared to that of other

Central Asian countries, using per capita comparisons. She added that higher priority was given to human rights and democratisation, to the detriment of security, technical and humanitarian issues. She further stated that the TRACECA project had not helped much with reducing Uzbekistan's problem of isolation.

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA stressed that the higher the investment in a project, the more successful it would be. On the Uzbek side she listed efforts to reduce poverty, to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals, and to work towards sustainable development, democracy, improving the rule of law and human rights. She commented that EU funding was only at seven to eight million Euros a year, and that this was insufficient.

Mrs. ABDULLAEVA spoke of a differentiated approach for each Central Asian country, particularly in the socio-economic development of the recipient country. She cited transport and IT as areas that needed enhanced cooperation in Uzbekistan, and spoke of the potential for using grants in parallel with other loans and donations. She concluded by asking for greater technical and financial assistance from the EU.

The European Commission representative stressed the importance of improving the social welfare of citizens, and the promotion of good governance and enhanced rule of law in Uzbekistan as priorities. He noted that there had been substantial progress in welfare, in the field of rural development, animal health at the level of small producers, and in improving local incomes and the general health of the population. He mentioned a number of projects, including joint projects with UNICEF, and EU assistance with humanitarian services.

He said that there was a good basis for expansion of the rule of law, and that there were a lot of projects in this area which were ready to go but that the EU was just waiting for the green light. He added there were certain issues which could only be tackled as part of a regional programme, such as border management. He said that there was continuing and renewed EU support for drug prevention and health conditions in prisons. He also talked about contributions to the TRACECA programme, and said there would be a ministerial meeting on December 4 2008, and that it was intended to expand this programme in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ closed the formal session of the PCC.

8. Any other business

There was no other business

9. Date and place of the eighth meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee in 2009

The next EU-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee will take place after the European Parliament elections. It should take place in Tashkent at a date to be determined in due course.

Human Rights Round Table

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ talked about the recent positive developments in Uzbekistan regarding human rights issues, highlighting the recent abolition of the death penalty and introduction of habeas corpus. She also mentioned the recent release of two Uzbekistan human rights activists, Mr. Mamarajab Nazarov and Mr. Dilmurod Mukhiddinov. She spoke too about the Martin Ennals Award and the fact that the recipient of this award, Ms Tadjibaeva, had been given permission to travel abroad to collect this award.

However, Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ stressed that there were concerns over the ten year prison sentences handed down to Mr. Salijon Abdurakhmanov and Mr. Agzam Turgunov. She added that these cases were viewed by the European Union as an improper resolution of human rights issues.

She noted too the problems NGOs faced trying to operate in Uzbekistan, underlining the fact that Human Rights Watch was not even allowed to operate freely in Uzbekistan, and that there was not adequate cooperation with UN rapporteurs.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ pointed out that the OSCE had written a very critical report on the presidential elections held on 23 December 2007, saying that they failed to meet many OSCE regulations. She added that according to the ODIHR organisation, the polls took place in a strictly controlled political environment, leaving no room for opposition. She also mentioned the amnesty that allowed for the release of political prisoners, and expressed regret that so few prisoners were released.

She finished by saying that she believed the Uzbek authorities to be taking real steps on human rights issues but hoped that these programmes would be properly implemented.

Mr. TESHABAEV expressed his gratitude at the organisation of a round table since, he said, Uzbekistan cared greatly about human rights. He stated that Uzbekistan had ratified 70 international human rights documents, including UN documents. He added that rights of freedom of expression and the right to appeal to a court were very important because the well being of citizens was the most important thing for Uzbekistan and that the involvement of social groups was an integral part of this.

Mr. SAIDOV argued that no state could claim to have fully resolved their human rights issues, and that there was good will behind Uzbekistan's implementation of human rights protections. He stated that Uzbekistan was the first country in the region to set up a sub committee on judicial affairs devoted entirely to human rights.

On torture, Mr. SAIDOV noted that a UN special rapporteur on torture had been invited to Uzbekistan, but he had stated that there were systematic cases of torture in Uzbekistan and had exceeded his mandate. He reiterated, for the benefit of Mr. Callanan, that there were over 5000 NGOs in Uzbekistan, and 48 International NGOs were represented.

Mr. SAIDOV stated that the presidential elections were legitimate and that there had been more than 300 foreign observers present and that the elections had been internationally accepted as legitimate.

Mr. SAIDOV stressed that no one could be imprisoned in Uzbekistan unless they had violated the penal code. He concluded by outlining a decree on Human Rights and laws which focused on areas such as children's rights and the ombudsman.

Mrs. RASHIDOVA noted that, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Program of actions devoted to the 60th Anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" dated 1st May 2008, Institute for civil society studies, National Center for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Authorized person of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) for the first time studied the activity of structures dealing with Human Rights under the General Prosecutor's office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan. As a result they made a report with recommendations for strengthening public control over the activity of law enforcement bodies and the Judiciary.

She also stressed that the monitoring of human rights was an important component of the parliamentary control carried out by the Authorized person of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights.

She said that the Ombudsman annually submitted their reports to the Parliament of the country. She added that there had been numerous seminars with regards to the rights of prisoners and, whereas 20 complaints had been received against prison officers the year before, there were only two complaints this year. She felt that from 2003 onwards most of the complaints received by the Ombudsman's office were to do with socioeconomic rights. She said that human rights were implemented in practice.

Mr. KANYAZOV said that 400 laws on human rights had been passed, and that they all corresponded to international standards. He spoke of a national action plan to combat human trafficking and the work being done in that area. In terms of young people and the rights of the child, he pointed out that 64% of the population were young, so this was a very important area. He noted, in particular, safeguards on the rights of the child, with minimum working ages, and national plans and special laws to protect those rights.

Mr. KANYAZOV spoke about habeas corpus and of laws which had been passed to ensure that there was no interference with court procedures or decisions. He also spoke of increased protection for businesses from state interference, and noted that the practice of seizing banking assets had been severely restricted.

Mr. KANYAZOV underlined too that the number of crimes that were considered grave had been reduced and 26 crimes no longer carried a custodial sentence. In the last seven years, he said, there had been a 50% decrease in the number of people arrested.

On Human Rights Watch, Mr. KANYAZOV said that the NGO worker was refused accreditation because his Curriculum Vitae suggested ignorance of the mentality of the Uzbek government, but added that other candidates for that post would be considered for accreditation.

Mr. CALLANAN retorted that the problem was that human rights were not implemented in practice. He highlighted numerous human rights reports which all found severe problems with the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. He added that ignorance of Uzbekistan mentality was not a good reason for expelling an NGO representative, stating

that the mark of a true society was that it was big enough to accept criticism and praise in equal measures.

Mr. CALLANAN further stressed that the last elections were not legitimate and that no respectable international organisation would say that they were. He read out from a report by the OSCE which was highly critical of the elections. He then apologised for having to leave again, and stressed that he meant no discourtesy.

Professor Innerio SEMINATORE, President of the European Institute of International Relations, who had been given the floor, said he was speaking as an international observer and had spent four days in Tashkent during the elections of 23 December 2008. He said there were three main stages in the elections, and that the campaign seemed to stick to the basic rules and regulations. He acknowledged that he was not present for the actual voting process, but he stressed that from his point of view the procedure had gone ahead smoothly.

Professor SEMINATORE also spoke about human rights being just one variable in a society or a state. He asked if the political stability of a state should be sacrificed in order to implement Western-style measures towards democratisation. He added that human rights was not the basis of a society but was just one element, and that the most important element for governments was political stability. He concluded that it was on the basis of political stability that one had to check, judge, consider and evaluate efforts made by governments working towards democracy.

Mrs. JUKNEVIČIENĖ thanked everyone for their contributions and for their continued cooperation. She also thanked the delegates for listening to what people had to say.

Mr. TESHABAEV thanked representatives of the European Parliament for the organisation of the meeting and for engaging in dialogue. He fully agreed that the meeting had taken place in a constructive atmosphere and had contributed further to mutual understanding. He wished the participants all the best.

The round table ended at 12.50pm.

**LISTA DE ASISTENCIA/PREZENČNÍ LISTINA/DELTAGERLISTE/ANWESENHEITSLISTE/KOHALOLIJATE
NIMEKIRI/ KATAΣTAΣH ΠΑΡΟΝΤΩΝ/RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/LISTE DE PRÉSENCE/ELENCO DI
PRESENZA/APMEKLĒJUMU REĢISTRŠ/DALYVIŲ SĄRAŠAS/JELENLÉTI ÍV/REĢISTRU TA'
ATTENDENZA/PRESENTIELIJST/LISTA OBECNOŚCI/ LISTA DE PRESENÇAS/PREZENČNÁ LISTINA/SEZNAM
NAVZOČIH/LÄSNÄOLOLISTA/DELTAGARLISTA**

Mesa/Předsednictví/Formandskabet/Vorstand/Juhatus/Προεδρείο/Bureau/Ufficio di presidenza/Prezidijs/Biuras/Elnökség/Prezydium/ Predsednictvo/Predsedstvo/Puheenjohtajisto/Presidiet (*)
Ona Juknevičienė (P)
Diputados/Poslanci/Medlemmer/Mitglieder/Parlamendiliikmed/Mέλη/Members/Députés/Deputati/Deputāti/Nariai/Képviselek/ Membri/Leden/Posłowie/Deputados/Jäsenet/Ledamöter
Elisabeth Jeggle (1,2), Marusya Ivanova Lyubcheva (1),
Suplentes/Náhradníci/Stedfortrædere/Stellvertreter/Asendusliikmed/Αναπληρωτές/Substitutes/Suppléants/Supplenti/Aizstājēji/ Pavaduojantys nariai/Póttagok/Sostituti/Plaatsvervangers/Zastępcy/Membros suplentes/Náhradníci/Namestniki/Varajäsenet/ Suppleanter
Martin Callanan (1,2), Valdis Dombrovskis (1), Yiannakis Matsis (1), Esko Seppänen (1)

178 (2)
183 (3)
Alojz Peterle
46 (6) (Punto del orden del día/Bod pořadu jednání/Punkt på dagsordenen/Tagesordnungspunkt/Päevakorra punkt/Ημερήσια Διάταξη Σημείο/Agenda item/Point OJ/Punto all'ordine del giorno/Darba kārtības punkts/Darbotvarkēs punktas/Napirendi pont/Punt Agenda/ Agendapunt/Punkt porządku dziennego/Ponto OD/Bod programu schôdze/Točka UL/Esityslistan kohta/Föredragningslista punkt)

Observadores/Pozorovatelé/Observatører/Beobachter/Vaatlejad/Παρατηρητές/Observers/Observateurs/Osservatori/Novērotāji/ Stebėtojai/Megfigyelők/Osservatori/Waarnemers/Obserwatorzy/Observadores/Pozorovatelia/Opazovalci/Tarkkailijat/Observatörer

Por invitación del presidente/Na pozvání předsedy/Efter indbydelse fra formanden/Auf Einladung des Vorsitzenden/Esimehe kutsel/ Με πρόσκληση του Προέδρου/At the invitation of the Chair(wo)man/Sur l'invitation du président/Su invito del presidente/ Pēc priekšsēdētāja uzaicinājuma/Pirmininkui pakvietus/Az elnök meghívására/Fuq stedina tač'-Chairman'/Op uitnodiging van de voorzitter/Na zaproszenie Przewodniczącego/A convite do Presidente/Na pozvanie predsedu/Na povabilo predsednika/ Puheenjohtajan kutsusta/På ordförandens inbjudan

Consejo/Rada/Rådet/Rat/Nõukogu/Συμβούλιο/Council/Conseil/Consiglio/Padome/Taryba/Tanács/Kunsill/Raad/Conselho/Svet/Neuvosto/Rådet (*)	
Tressing	
Comisión/Komise/Kommissionen/Kommission/Euroopa Komisjon/Επιτροπή/Commission/Commissione/Komisija/Bizottság/Kummissjoni/Commissie/Komisja/Comissão/Komisia/Komissio/Kommissionen (*)	
Agisheva, Borgoltz	
Otras instituciones/Ostatní orgány a instituce/Andre institutioner/Andere Organe/Muud institutsioonid/Άλλα θεσμικά όργανα/Other institutions/Autres institutions/Altre istituzioni/Citas iestādes/Kitos institucijos/Más intézmények/Istituzzjonijiet ohra/Andere instellingen/Inne instytucje/Outras Instituições/Iné inštitúcie/Druge institucije/Muut toimeelimeet/Andra institutioner/organ	
	Mr. Mukhammadyusuf TESHABAEV (Uzbek mission) Mr. Shavkat SALIKHOV (Uzbek mission) Mr. Gofurjon ALIEV (Uzbek mission) Mrs. Mavjuda RADJABOVA (Uzbek mission) Mr. Alisher SULTANOV (Uzbek mission) Mr. Abdurafik AKHADOV (Uzbek mission) Mr. Akhtam TURSUNOV (Uzbek mission) Mr. Akmal SAIDOV (Uzbek mission) Mrs. Sharbat ABDULLAEVA (Uzbek mission) Mrs. Sayora RASHIDOVA (Uzbek mission) Mr. Esimurat KANYAZOV (Uzbek mission)
Otros participantes/Ostatní účastníci/Endvidere deltog/Andere Teilnehmer/Muud osalejad/Επίσης Παρόντες/Other participants/Autres participants/Altri partecipanti/Citi klātesošie/Kiti dalyviai/Más résztvevők/Partecipanti ohra/Andere aanwezigen/Inni uczestnicy/Outros participantes/Iní účastníci/Druzi udeleženci/Muut osallistujat/Övriga deltagare	
Fautré (Human Rights without Frontiers) Sauvage (reporters without borders) Toffoli, Hansen (European Association of Jehovah's Witnesses)	
Secretaría de los Grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupin/Gruppenes sekretariat/Sekretariat der Fraktionen/Fraktsioonide sekretariaat/Γραμματεία των Πολιτικών Ομάδων/Sekretariats of political groups/Secrétariat des groupes politiques/Segreteria gruppi politici/Politisko grupu sekretariāts/Frakciju sekretoriai/Képviseletcsoportok titkársága/Sekretarjat gruppi politici/Fractiesecretariaten/Sekretariat Grup Politycznych/Secr. dos grupos políticos/Sekretariát politických skupín/Sekretariat političnih skupin/Poliittisten ryhmien sihteeristöt/Gruppenas sekretariat	
PPE-DE PSE ALDE Verts/ALE GUE/NGL IND/DEM UEN NI	Perrin
Gabinete del Presidente/Kancelář předsedy/Formandens Kabinet/Kabinett des Präsidenten/Presidendi kantselei/Γραφείο Προέδρου/President's Office/Cabinet du Président/Gabinetto del Presidente/Priekšsēdētāja kabinets/Pirmininko kabinetas/Elnöki hivatal/Kabinett tal-President/Kabinet van de Voorzitter/Gabinet Przewodniczącego/Gabinete do Presidente/Kancelária predsedu/Urad predsednika/Puhemiehen kabinetti/Talmanens kansli	

Gabinete del Secretario General/Kancelář generálního tajemníka/Generalsekretærens Kabinet/Kabinett des Generalsekretärs/Peasekretäri büroo/Γραφείο Γενικού Γραμματέα/Secretary-General's Office/Cabinet du Secrétaire général/Gabinetto del Segretario generale/Generalsekretära kabinets/Generalinio sekretoriaus kabinetas/Főtitkári hivatal/Kabinett tas-Segretarju Ġenerali/Kabinet van de secretaris-generaal/Gabinet Sekretarza Generalnego/Gabinete do Secretário-Geral/Kancelária generálneho tajomníka/Urad generalnega sekretarja/Pääsihteerin kabinetti/Generalsekreterarens kansli	
Dirección General/Generální ředitelství/Generaldirektorat/Generaldirektion/Peadirektoraat/Γενική Διεύθυνση/Directorate-General/Direction générale/Direzione generale/Generāldirektorāts/Generalinis direktoratas/Főigazgatóság/Direttorat Generali/Direktoraten-generaal/Dyrekcja Generalna/Direcção-Geral/Generálne riaditeľstvo/Generalni direktorat/Pääosasto/Generaldirektorat	
DG PRES DG IPOL DG EXPO DG INFO DG PERS DG IFIN DG TRED DG FINS	Rupp
Servicio Jurídico/Právní služba/Juridisk Tjeneste/Juristischer Dienst/Öigusteenistus/Νομική Υπηρεσία/Legal Service/Service juridique/Servizio giuridico/Juridiskais dienests/Teisės tarnyba/Jogi szolgálat/Servizz legali/Juridische Dienst/Wydział prawny/Serviço Jurídico/Právny servis/Pravna služba/Oikeudellinen yksikkö/Rättstjänsten	
Secretaría de la comisión/Sekretariát výboru/Udvalgssekretariatet/Ausschusssekretariat/Komisjoni sekretariaat/Γραμματεία επιτροπής/Committee secretariat/Secrétariat de la commission/Segreteria della commissione/Komitejas sekretariāts/Komiteo sekretoriatas/A bizottság titkársága/Sekretarjat tal-kumitat/Commissiesecretariaat/Sekretariat komisji/Sekretariado da comissão/Sekretariat odbora/Valiokunnan sihteeristö/Utskottssekretariatet	
Boden	
Asistente/Asistent/Assistant/Assistenz/Βοηθός/Assistant/Assistente/Pālīgs/Padējējas/asszisztens/Asyistent/Pomočnik/Avustaja/Assistenten	
Mollet	

- * (P) = Presidente/Předseda/Formand/Vorsitzender/Esimees/Πρόεδρος/Chair(wo)man/Président/Priekšsēdētājs/Pirmininkas/Elnök/Chairman/Voorzitter/Przewodniczący/Předseda/Predsednik/Puheenjohtaja/Ordförande
- (VP) = Vicepresidente/Místopředseda/Næstformand/Stellvertretender
Vorsitzender/Aseesimees/Αντιπρόεδρος/Vice-Chair(wo)man/ Vice-Président/Priekšsēdētāja vietnieks/Pirmininko pavaduotojas/Alelnök/Víci 'Chairman'/Ondervoorzitter/ Wiceprzewodniczący/Vice-Presidente/Podpredseda/Podpredsednik/Varapuheenjohtaja/Vice ordförande
- (M) = Miembro/Člen/Medlem./Mitglied/Parlamendiliige/Μέλος/Member/Membre/Membro/Deputāts/Narys/Tag/képviselő/Membru/ Lid/Członek/Membro/Člen/Poslanec/Jäsen/Ledamot
- (F) = Funcionario/Úředník/Tjenestemand/Beamter/Ametnik/Υπάλληλος/Official/Fonctionnaire/Funzionario/Ierēdnis/Pareigūnas/Tisztviselő/Ufficjal/Ambtenaar/Urzędnik/Funcionário/Úradník/Uradnik/Virkamies/Tjänsteman